

**SEATTLE FIRE DEPARTMENT
2011 FIRE FIGHTER EXAM
ORAL INTERVIEW ORIENTATION**

This information packet is designed to assist candidates in preparing for the oral board examinations. The information session is meant to provide an overview of the oral interview procedures that will be used and a review of methods for preparing yourself for the interview.

The oral interview will be a formal business interview. Candidates will meet with a panel of Fire Fighters and/or Officers from the Seattle Fire Department. The panel will ask questions of the candidate. The panel will then immediately score the responses. They may also score the applicant on stress management, oral communication skills and appearance/posture.

Preparing for the Structured Oral Interview

Agenda

- I. Overview of oral interview procedures**
 - A. Preparation period
 - B. Interview and role of interview panel

- II. Review of methods for preparing for the interview**
 - A. How to present yourself during the interview
 - B. How to prepare yourself for the interview

- III. Question/Answer period**

*****This is only a sample letter – THE ACTUAL PROCEDURES (TIME LIMIT, NUMBER OF QUESTIONS, ETC.) USED FOR THE SEATTLE FIRE DEPARTMENT INTERVIEWS MAY BE DIFFERENT THAN THOSE DESCRIBED BELOW*****

**SEATTLE FIRE DEPARTMENT
____ APPLICANT PROCESS
ORAL INTERVIEW ORIENTATION**

Dear Applicant,

Welcome to the initial oral interview phase of the application process. This phase is divided into two parts: a brief orientation/preparation period and the actual interview.

Orientation/Preparation Period

You are now in your orientation/preparation period. During this preparation period, you will read and sign this letter. This letter explains the interview procedures and provides information that may be helpful during your interview.

Interview

This is a critical phase in the applicant process since it will give the Department an opportunity to meet with you and make an evaluation of your skills and abilities.

The oral interview will be structured. This means that each applicant will be asked to answer the same questions, in the same order, as all other applicants. In addition, the procedures used to ask questions and score your responses will be highly regulated and standardized. This may give you the feeling that the interview procedures are somewhat stiff and formal. This is not meant to cause you any concern or discomfort. Rather, these very routine procedures are simply meant to ensure the greatest level of fairness possible for all applicants.

The Panel will ask you a total of _____ questions. You will have a maximum of _____ minutes to answer all of them. This should be plenty of time for you to answer all of the panel's questions, so do not feel that you will be rushed for time. Instead, it is very important that you answer all questions as completely and thoroughly as you can. Assume that the panel has not seen information regarding your background, and therefore, is not aware of your educational or professional experience.

Note that the panel will be scoring each question individually. If your answer to a question seems to overlap with your response to a previous question, you may need to repeat yourself to receive credit toward that question. You should let the panel know when you have completed your response to each question.

Please be aware that it is your responsibility to answer the panel's questions. Because of the procedures that have been adopted, the panel will not be able to help you interpret or evaluate the

questions. Also, try to make your answers as complete and thorough as you can. You may also wish to take a few seconds before you answer each question to collect all of your thoughts.

You may not submit a resume during this interview process. Do not take a resume into the interview. You are not permitted to refer to a resume or any personal notes during the interview.

The members of the Department wish you luck with this interview. It is our hope that these procedures will provide each applicant with the very best opportunity to tell us about himself/herself.

After you have read this document, please sign below.

I have read and I understand these directions.

Signature

Date

Name printed

ID #

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I _____ (*signature*) agree that I will not disclose the content of the interview questions that I will see or hear during this interview session. In particular, this agreement precludes me from discussing the interview questions with anyone until **all** interviews have been completed.

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Oral Interview Recommendations

The following tips may help you to prepare for the interview:

- 1. *Read the question carefully as it is being asked by the panel.***

Answer the question that is being asked. The panel will be scoring you on how you answer the question that is being asked.

- 2. *Take a few seconds to organize your thoughts before you start your response.***

Try not to ramble with your responses – the more organized you are in your responses, the easier it is for the panel to understand and score your answers.

- 3. *Make your answers as thorough as you can within the time that is allotted.***

The more pertinent discussion and information that you include in your response to each question, the more you will assist the panel in scoring that question.

- 4. *Tell the panel about yourself.***

If you don't tell the panel about yourself, they won't get the information through any other source. Remember – the panel will rate you on what you say during the interview, and not what they previously know about you.

- 5. *Repeat answers if necessary.***

The panel will be scoring each question individually. If your answer to a question seems to overlap with your response to a previous question, you may need to repeat yourself to receive credit toward that question.

- 6. *Be aware of your time.***

You should have enough time to answer all of the questions but be aware that you will not be allowed to run overtime.

7. Practice, Practice, Practice

- A. Go to the library and find out what types of questions are typically asked during an interview.**

The more you know what to expect, the more relaxed you will feel during your interview.

- B. Practice interviewing with a friend, in front of a mirror, or using a video or tape recorder.**

The more feedback you have regarding how you present yourself, the more effective you can be in your responses.

- C. Be relaxed.**

Exercise, and reduce both caffeine and sugar prior to your scheduled interview to help you be more relaxed during the interview. Additionally, the panel may be rating you on your communication skills and stress management skills at the conclusion of the interview.